Central Vermont Internet

Business Development Committee Meeting

02 August 2018

Institute for Sustainable Communities Conference Room

535 Stone Cutters Way, Montpelier, VT

5:00 PM

Present: Elliott Bent, Jeremy Hansen, Jerry Diamantides, Stephen Whitaker, David Healy, Dan Jones

Agenda

5:00 Meeting call to order

5:01 Meeting called to order.

5:02 Additions or changes to the agenda

5:05 Public Comments

5:10 Discussion – use of working groups to conduct research and report out to the larger committee

- The law states that all subcommittees or work groups announced need to be announced in accordance with the law.
- Clerk has requested that minutes be immediately delivered after meetings.

5:25 Discussion - name and branding for DBA

- Hansen said that he likes Central Vermont Internet.
- Bent volunteered to research and develop an approach to naming along with suggestions for the larger committee.
- Jones noted the advantages of Internet rather than committing to a technology.
- Hansen Central Vermont is a great limiter
- Whitaker Internet holds potential implications in terms of regulation.
- Whitaker noted that the district will carry different kinds of carriage. Cannot be limited to Internet.
    - Current favorites:
        - Central Vermont Fiber
        - Central Vermont Internet

5:40 Discussion - research into finance and organizational structures

- Whitaker asked what we mean by org structure. B corp? C corp?

- Hansen sequence over time of how money will be raised. Potentially reviewing EC Fiber's finance approach and improving/changing.
- Org structures has to do with implementation partners.
- Jones brought the Isleboro Maine paper. He'll send the article around to be shared publicly. Example of differing structure.
- Town can buy or contract service from the muni. Towns could build dark fiber and lease to us.
- Diamantides: isn't there something that exists to build out and lease?
- Whitaker: Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches. Calais: they might self-fund their own pilot and turn it over to the district? So we could foster a nimble approach to take advantage opportunities that present themselves.
- Healy and Diamantides: suggested that finance and structure are two different things, and that perhaps two different people could research and furnish recommendations on this.
- Whitaker: We don't want to get locked into a monopoly. Forward looking. Future proof.
- Hansen agreed.
- Whitaker voiced his belief that we should be building jobs locally. Not targeting partners out of state.
- Diamantides volunteered to research organizational structures.
- Whitaker pointed out that it meshes our upcoming discussion of potential partners.
- Hansen what exactly would finance research look like.
- Diamantides: vehicles, timing,
- Healy: how to raise with implementation & business plan
- Jones: nonprofit philanthropy has advantage of no business plan.
- Whitaker: Grants vs. first years' service.
- Topic for next meeting: what are we selling and when?
- Whitaker: can a town pay for planning services on their own?
- Need an operational entity that would do that.
- Jones: there's a process where we need a story to tell. In each of our towns there are foundations, which could potentially be tackled. Budget and narrative.
- Hansen: let's just whiteboard this sucker:
  - Philanthropic donations
    - Foundations
    - Individual giving
      - Large dollar donor
      - Small dollar donor (crowdfunding)
      - Legacy giving
      - In-kind donations (tech, property, access)
  - Gov't Grants
    - Federal
      - USDA
      - FCC
    - State
      - USF
      - ACCD
        - CDBGs
        - Planning grants

- ○ Partner sources of funding (Vermont access network, Vermont Public Television, Towns & Munis)
- ○ Private Equity

<mark>Action item: Ask if anyone on the governing board will be willing to take this on.</mark>

Parking lot: Mechanism by which to get the state to fund our initiatives. (Lobbying? Draft leg?)

5:55 Discussion - various bank services appropriate for nonprofit use

- Healy - finding a bank that is supportive of community investment and development.
- Hansen - Not as simple as opening an acct. Must follow muni requirements.
- Whitaker Ask Barlow?
- Hansen - Think it would be just as easy to ask VSECU what requirements there are.
- Whitaker - who holds Berlin's acct?
- Hansen - it varies.
- Healy - Northfield Savings does a lot of community development.
- Hansen - We want to try and get on this prior to end of year to take advantage of giving season.
- Hansen - Treasurer cannot be on the Governing board. Often Treasurer are paid.
- Diamantides - Agree that at some point in the future should be paid.

<mark>Action Item(s): Recommendation to governing board: We need finance committee and treasurer. Whitaker will ask the two banks cited about interest rates and requirements for municipal accounts</mark>

6:10 Identify a short list of potential operating partners that exist in Vermont

- Diamantides noted that there is a lot of overlap between the many research projects.
- Hansen noted that this list would be very helpful
- Whitaker: Five he can think of: VTel, Stowe Cable, Valley Net, Waitsfield Fayston, Washington Electric, GMP, Transvideo, Topsham Telephone, Kingdom Fiber, Cloud Alliance, RB Tech, TDS Telecom, OTelco (Shorham), Connecticut-based co that did Islesboro's network, Tilson (Maine), Goddard College (colocation potential), Norwich University (colocation potential), VTC, The STATE, Velco, Towns? Cities? BT

6:25 Establishment of CVI talking points

30 Sec Elevator Pitch
Who we are, and where we are now?

Locally-owned, locally governed, not-for-profit. We plan to be fiber-optic based.

- Who are you?
- What do you do?

- Taxes?
- Pole usage?
- Timing?
- Will we respect Net Neutrality?
- Distinction between us and other providers?

Action:

6:35 Discussion - RFP's for local service providers

Tabled for later meeting.

6:45 Discussion – Market planning

- Healy: Put a draft market plan outline together as a starting point for the committee.
- Whitaker suggested we keep a running list of online collab tools that leg could consider to amend open meeting laws.
- Healy: Survey 123. Using E911 database to drive Survey 123. Should we ask 1st names.
- Whitaker: Private will FOIA our survey data.
- Whitaker: There are carveouts, but they haven't been tested.
- Hansen: Agreed this survey data would be helpful.
- Whitaker: we can provide a disclaimer that we'll enforce privacy.
- Hansen: Let's keep the data collected anonomyzed "fuzzy"
- Healy agreed.
- Hansen: There are only three structures covered by Comcast so there could be deductions in terms of personally identifiable info.
- Bent: Does Survey 123 cost money?
- Whitaker: Asked if we could send to policy committee. What's the hurry?
- Diamantides: This could help in terms of raising money.
- Healy: Good to determine market interest.
- CAW: Discussion about video service.
- Healy: Talked to VantagePoint. Person worked on 5-6 fiber projects could talk to the Board. RFP for engineering.
- Healy pointed out underserved towns. Developing the criteria to target communities.
- Survey 123 question do you work from home?
- Roxbury adjoins ECFiber territory.
- Whitaker: Williamstown is part of something. He thinks we should target towns to join the district - Moretown, Woodbury, Waterbury & Washington

Action Item: Marketing Plan & Maps Placed in CVI Folder

6:55 Roundtable

6:58 Next Meeting – set time and place

Next meeting is Sept. 6 5:15-7:15
7:00 Adjourn